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PP RUEHQU
DE RUEHPU #0523/01 0751918
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 161918Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5628
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1470
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1293
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 0754
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1168

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000523

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [ASEC](#) [PINR](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: GANGS OF CITE SOLEIL: BACK TO BASICS

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 505

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¶1. (U) This message is sensitive but unclassified -- please protect accordingly.

¶2. (SBU) Summary: Cite Soleil is rife with gang activity, which continues even in light of the March 13 arrest of gang leader Evans Jeune (reftel). The International Institute of Migration (IOM) reported that working in Cite Soleil is still surprisingly difficult and they face much interference from gang members, despite MINUSTAH's military control of the slum. Gangs continue to harass the population and are attempting, albeit with minimal success, to regroup and restart criminal activity. Despite improved overall security, the everyday lives of residents are still treacherous and the importance of MINUSTAH's strong presence cannot be overstated. End Summary.

¶3. (SBU) Based on his recent personal experiences as well as accounts from contractors and local leadership, Matt Huber (strictly protect) of IOM, described to Poloff the current conditions and gang activity in Cite Soleil. IOM is USAID's principal implementing partner for development projects in Port-au-Prince's poor neighborhoods. Huber stated that MINUSTAH is clearly in control in Cite Soleil and he and his contractors feel safe in the neighborhood. (Note: Huber has a higher than average threshold for insecurity. For example, he travels through the slums in the open bed of a truck because he feels that being visible to the gangs protects him from being attacked or kidnapped. End note.) However, he reported that gangs have sabotaged recent attempts by IOM to restart ongoing stabilization projects, including: threatening a community leader for organizing the resumption of a road paving project, accusing him of paving the way for MINUSTAH to wage further attacks; hijacking a piece of heavy equipment and using it to cut trenches in the roads; and demanding payoffs or protection money before work can start. Additionally, gang members are discouraging the population from taking advantage of MINUSTAH humanitarian efforts, such as water distribution and health clinics, with threats of bodily harm.

¶4. (SBU) Huber cited a long list of dangerous gangsters who

are still at-large in Cite Soleil, including Blade, aka Nason, currently the leader of Ti Ayiti. According to Huber, Blade is trying to position himself as Cite Soleil's preeminent gangster. Blade is not well liked in the neighborhood, but people are afraid of him and so continue to follow his orders. Huber compared him with Evans in terms of his viciousness and lack of conscience. The week of March 12 Blade followed a group of IOM contractors around for an entire day and demanded they pay him money in order to continue with their projects.

15. (SBU) MINUSTAH political affairs deputy Lizbeth Cullity (strictly protect) told Polcouns on March 14 that there is chatter in Cite Soleil that someone will take Evans place as the leader in Boston. Evans' brother Claude presented himself for the position but was not a popular candidate. Blade, aka Nason, is the front runner for the position, but Cullity called the attempt laughable and doesn't think the gang members dare confront MINUSTAH. She noted that the gangs couldn't even organize themselves all in one place to elect a new leader.

16. (SBU) On March 2, MINUSTAH officials presented an optimistic picture of the situation in Cite Soleil in a discussion with Polcouns. MINUSTAH intelligence, JMAC deputy Mike Center (strictly protect), agreed that gangs continued to intimidate the local populace, but asserted that gang organizations no longer control Cite Soleil as they once did.

17. (SBU) Comment: MINUSTAH, by all accounts, does have control of Cite Soleil. Nevertheless, that does not mean that the average Cite Soleil resident has been liberated from gangs and now feels safe to go about his or her daily life free from extortion, harassment and threats of physical harm. From a military perspective, the emerging gang leaders pose

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no threat, but on the community level they continue to harass and terrorize the population. This emphasizes the need for both continued MINUSTAH presence and increased presence and visibility of local HNP who are capable of ongoing community policing. If MINUSTAH eases up, the gangs will be prepared to begin anew their criminal activities. End comment.
SANDERSON